

I have recently started working part-time as a Video Relay Interpreter after 14 years in the field as a community interpreter, and I am continually awed and inspired by the astounding improvement of access it provides to Deaf and hard-of-hearing people. Participation in business meetings, questions to medical providers, conversations with school personnel and friends and family, requests for technical support, interactions with local and national businesses: all these and more are made possible, truly, for the first time. The ease, efficiency, and accuracy of the communication is of a quality that traditional relay services could not begin to hope for. Calls that used to take 40 minutes now take 5, and calls that would never have been made before can now be made with an ease that very nearly matches the ease experienced by hearing phone customers. Please do not cut funding for this important service. The Deaf community is empowered and liberated by the access it provides.